

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

June 29, 2006

TUCKER FORD FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENT

File No. 06-036

Project Manager: Kate Goodnight

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$220,000 to the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District for improvements for fish passage at Tucker Road on the West Branch of Soquel Creek in Santa Cruz County.

LOCATION: West Branch Soquel Creek in Santa Cruz County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Location and Site Map

Exhibit 2: Site Photographs

Exhibit 3: Letters of Support

Exhibit 4: Tucker Ford Initial Study

Exhibit 5: Tucker Ford Notice of Determination

Exhibit 6: Tucker Ford Biotic Assessment & Monitoring Program

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Section 31220 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed two hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$220,000) to the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District [SCCRCD] to remove a concrete ford and replace it with a clear span bridge at Tucker Road on the West Branch of Soquel Creek in Santa Cruz County to improve fish passage subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the SCCRCD’s commencement of work, the Executive Officer of the Conservancy shall approve in writing a work program, schedule of completion, project budget, any contractors to be employed and a signing plan acknowledging the Conservancy;

2. The SCCRCD shall submit evidence that all necessary permits have been obtained;
3. The SCCRCD shall submit evidence that it has obtained landowner permission for construction of the project; and
4. The SCCRCD shall implement post-project effectiveness monitoring for three years following construction according to a monitoring plan approved by the Executive Officer of the Conservancy, and will ensure that the revegetation maintenance plan is implemented, including three years of summer irrigation and follow up removal of non-native species for five years.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 5.5 of Division 21, section 31220 of the Public Resources Code regarding integrated coastal and marine resources protection.
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the mitigated Negative Declaration approved on May 18, 2006 by the County of Santa Cruz and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to \$220,000 to the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (“SCCRCD”) to remove a concrete ford and replace it with a clear span bridge at Tucker Road on the West Branch of Soquel Creek in Santa Cruz County (Exhibit 1) in order to improve fish passage.

The project will remove an existing concrete ford (Exhibit 2) and replace it with a 120-foot span bridge that will accommodate a 100-year flood event. The channel upstream of the ford will be reshaped to a 3% slope to restore the former channel morphology. Channel banks will be shaped to a minimum 2:1 slope, stabilized with temporary erosion control measures and revegetated with native plants. The presence of bedrock in the downstream reach should provide substantial grade control once the ford is removed. A stream by-pass will be constructed; no heavy equipment will be operated within the live stream channel. The SCCRCD plans to construct this project between August 1, 2006 and October 15, 2006. All physical components of the project using Conservancy funds will be maintained by the landowner. SCCRCD will prepare a post-project effectiveness monitoring plan to be approved by the Executive Director of the

Conservancy, which will include an annual report for three years following construction to determine whether the project is functioning as designed.

The primary purpose of this project is to improve fish passage via removal of the existing ford. In addition, replacement of the ford with a clear span bridge will have beneficial impacts on woody debris movement and will drastically reduce the sediment inputs currently resulting from maintenance of the ford. Tucker Ford is designated as a Priority 1 (High) recommendation in the Soquel Creek Watershed Assessment and Enhancement Plan (2003), funded by the Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Fish and Game (“DFG”), which identified fish passage barriers, the lack of large woody debris, and sediment as major factors limiting the success of anadromous fish in the West Branch of Soquel Creek.

The West Branch of Soquel Creek supports the federally threatened steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and historically supported the federally and state endangered coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*). The Soquel Creek Watershed Assessment and Enhancement Plan identified two fords on the West Branch of Soquel Creek. Olson Ford is located 10,000 feet downstream of Tucker Ford. Both projects were selected by DFG and National Marine Fisheries Service (“NMFS”) staff for funding for designs and permits via Phase I of the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (funded by the Coastal Conservancy in 2003 – see Project History section) and these agencies have been closely involved in the design of both projects. Olson Ford was scheduled for replacement with a bridge in 2006 but DFG, the primary funding source, has delayed the project until 2007.

Although there are two natural impediments downstream of Tucker Ford, observations by landowners and resource agency staff indicate that steelhead are able to pass all of the downstream impediments at some point during most years and make it to the Tucker Ford. With the removal of both of these fords, all of the man-made impediments along the West Branch of Soquel Creek between its confluence with the mainstem and the Laurel Mill Dam will have been removed, facilitating salmonid access to over 7 miles of stream.

This project is one of 17 restoration projects being implemented this year in the county as a direct result of the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (“IWRP”) for Santa Cruz County and the Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program, both funded by the Conservancy.

The SCCRCD has a proven track record for successfully administering Coastal Conservancy grants, including the Arana Gulch Watershed Assessment and Enhancement Plan, the Lower Pajaro River Sediment Assessment and Enhancement Plan, and the Soquel Creek Watershed Assessment and Enhancement Plan, Phase I and II of the Permit Coordination Program for Santa Cruz County, and most recently the extremely complex Integrated Watershed Restoration Program Phase I grant, in addition to numerous other restoration programs and projects funded by federal, state, and local agencies and foundations.

Site Description:

The site is located on Tucker Road, a private road off Sugarloaf Road and approximately 7 miles from the unincorporated town of Soquel. The concrete ford was installed several years ago in order to make the wet crossing passable for vehicles and to provide access to four private

properties on the upper reaches of the West Branch of Soquel Creek about 10,000 feet above Olson Road and 17,150 feet upstream of the Hester Creek confluence. The ford, 31 feet long, 42 feet wide and 4 feet deep, retains sediment. Approximately 100 square yards of sediment erode downstream each year. Tucker Ford is a partial fish passage barrier and blocks the movement of large woody material necessary for aquatic habitat downstream.

Vegetation at the Tucker Ford project site consists of a mix of riparian and upland forest communities. Riparian trees are found in high and low flood terrace locations near the creek. Dominant species include white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) and yellow willow (*Salix lucida* spp. *lasianдра*). Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) is also found on the east bank downstream of the ford. All tree species identified in the project vicinity are native.

Understory species within the riparian zone include California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*)*, English ivy (*Hedera helix*)*, horsetail fern (*Equisetum areense*), wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*), giant chain fern (*Woodwardia fimbriata*), coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), swordfern (*Polystichum munitum*), French broom (*Genista monspessulana*)*, periwinkle (*Vinca major*)*, elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) and German ivy (*Senecio mikanioides*)*. A single specimen of pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*)* was also found. Understory species with an asterisk are non-native; most are also highly invasive and can be expected to spread into adjacent native habitats. The project revegetation plan includes removal of invasive species and replanting with native vegetation.

Field inspection did not reveal presence of any plant species of concern in any of the project study area. Ten rare plants are listed in the California Natural Diversity Data Base as possibly being found in this location although habitat is not ideal and occurrence is unlikely. Reconnaissance surveys performed in late winter and early spring did not identify any individuals of these species, however properly timed floristic survey is necessary to ensure no individuals are present. This survey is required to be performed in spring/summer 2006. In the unlikely event individuals are found the project will be revised to avoid the plants.

The West Branch of the Soquel Creek is habitat for steelhead trout (*Onchorynchus mykiss*) and coho salmon (*Onchorynchus kisutch*). Steelhead trout are listed as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Coho salmon are listed as threatened under the Federal ESA and as endangered under the California ESA.

Wildlife habitat values in the project area are generally high given the significant and diverse native riparian canopy. Except for limited vehicle traffic across the ford and presence of a single family residence, human use of the project area is relatively sparse. The presence of a multi-layered riparian tree canopy increases wildlife habitat values, while invasive non-native understory plant species has slightly reduced these values in the immediate project site area.

Small mammals expected to be present in the project area include California mouse (*Peromyscus californicus*), pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) and raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). Coyote, bobcat, mountain lion and black-tailed deer can be expected occasionally in the project vicinity. Several bat species, including the Townsend's big-eared bat (a state and federal species of concern) and California myotis can be expected to forage nightly

along the riparian corridor although roosting and nesting habitat is absent in the immediate project vicinity.

The amphibian community of the study area is apparently rather small due to the disturbed nature of the area due to landslide debris and the scouring floods that occur periodically in the river. Amphibians were not observed during field visits, but Pacific tree frog, Foothill yellow-legged frog, California slender salamander, California newt and arboreal salamander are expected to occur. Habitat conditions are poor for breeding California red-legged frogs along the creek within the immediate area of the proposed project site.

A qualified biologist will conduct protocol level surveys prior to construction to monitor for special status species.

For more detailed information on the biological setting of the project area see Exhibit 6: Biotic Assessment: Tucker Road Ford Replacement Project, West Branch Soquel Creek (Gilchrist and Associates 2006) available at the Coastal Conservancy's office, 1330 Broadway, Ste. 1100, Oakland, CA 94612 (510) 286-1015.

Project History:

Between 1998 and 2003, the Conservancy, DFG, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board funded over 14 fish passage and erosion risk assessments and watershed restoration plans for seven watersheds in Santa Cruz County. Staff from the Conservancy, DFG, Resource Conservation District, County and City of Santa Cruz, and the Coastal Watershed Council recognized that implementing the recommendations of these assessments and plans would be best accomplished by bringing together federal, state, and local resource and permitting agencies to identify the highest priority projects and assist with locating funding sources, providing technical assistance, and facilitating permitting. This led to the creation of the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program ("IWRP") for Santa Cruz County. The mission of IWRP is to facilitate and coordinate projects to improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality in Santa Cruz County watersheds using a voluntary, non-regulatory approach. Typical IWRP restoration projects include sediment reduction, fish passage improvement, and wetland and lagoon restoration.

Phase I of IWRP was funded by the Conservancy as a grant to the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District in 2003. The primary focus of Phase I is to help project leads with the cost and complexity of designs and permits for approximately 75-85 high priority projects recommended in the watershed plans and/or promoted by resource agencies. A technical advisory committee composed of federal, state, and local resource and permitting agencies oversees and facilitates the selection, design, and permitting of high priority projects to ensure that they are designed in the most technically feasible and cost-effective way. Funded separately by the Conservancy but also a part of IWRP, the first county-wide Partners in Restoration permit coordination program is being completed which will help ease the permitting complexity for landowners trying to do certain types of restoration projects.

The proposed Tucker Ford Fish Passage Improvement project was originally identified as high priority in the Soquel Creek Watershed Assessment and Enhancement Plan (2003) funded by the

Conservancy and DFG. DFG and NMFS both recommended this project be funded for designs and permits through Phase 1 of IWRP and these agencies were closely involved in the design process. Conservancy staff selected this project for possible Conservancy implementation funding (part of Phase II of IWRP) based on 1) the benefits achieved by increasing fish passage throughout the entire watershed as a result of modifying this significant barrier, 2) the thorough technical review of the designs by DFG and NMFS, 3) the lack of other funding sources available to ensure the projects are implemented this year, and 4) confidence in the budget preparation and expertise of the SCCRCD to carry out the project.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy*	\$220,000
USDA NRCS WHIP Program	\$147,715
NOAA/American Rivers Grant Program	\$49,875
Packard Foundation	\$29,500
Landowners	\$15,265
Total Project Cost	\$462,355

*The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for the proposed projects is an appropriation from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40). These funds may be used for coastal watershed protection projects consistent with Section 31220 of the Public Resources Code (see next section).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 5.5 (Section 31220) of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection.

Consistent with §31220(a), staff has consulted with State Water Resources Control Board 3 in the development of the projects to ensure consistency with Chapter 3 (commencing with §30915) [Clean Beaches Program] of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code [Watershed, Clean Beaches, and Water Quality Act].

Consistent with §31220(b)(2) and (3), the project will restore fish habitat within coastal watersheds and reduce the threats to coastal anadromous fish by modifying a significant anthropogenic barrier to fish migration and restoring access to over four miles of spawning and rearing habitat upstream of the project.

Consistent with §31220(c), the project includes a monitoring component for three years following construction to evaluate project effectiveness. Also consistent with §31220(c), the project is recommended in or consistent with local watershed management plans, the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Program for Northern Santa Cruz County, and the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (see Consistency With Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan section below).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective A** of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, the project will improve habitat for anadromous fish by restoring migration passage to over four miles of spawning and rearing habitat upstream of the project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** Supporters of these projects include State Senator Joseph Simitian, Assemblymember John Laird, the Department of Fish and Game, the National Marine Fisheries Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service ("NRCS"), American Rivers, the Packard Foundation, and others. Letters of support are included in Exhibit 3.
4. **Location:** The project is located on the West Branch of the Soquel Creek watershed in Santa Cruz County, which is partly in and partly out of the coastal zone. By modifying a significant passage barrier to restore access to over four miles of spawning and rearing habitat, the project will benefit coastal and marine anadromous fish.
5. **Need:** The proposed project would improve access to over four miles of habitat and ensure the timely implementation of an important steelhead and Coho salmon restoration opportunity. No other funding sources besides the ones already secured are available to allow the project to be constructed this year.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** Restoration of anadromous fisheries is widely recognized as a local, state and federal goal and the project is supported by both DFG and NMFS. The Soquel Creek watershed is a priority steelhead restoration stream and is identified as one of nine watersheds targeted in the Draft Strategic Plan for Restoration of Endangered Coho Salmon South of San Francisco Bay (Department of Fish and Game, 1998). The proposed project will restore access for steelhead and Coho salmon to over four miles of the watershed.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** The passage barrier impedes anadromous fish access to over four miles of habitat on the West Branch of Soquel Creek. It is critical that this barrier is modified in a timely manner in order to restore access to key habitat for two listed species, Coho salmon and steelhead.
8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** In addition to improving fish passage, the project will improve the passage of large woody material and address a chronic sedimentation source.

9. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above. This project is an excellent example of federal, state, local, and private agencies and organizations working together to achieve a mutual high priority project.
11. **Innovation:** IWRP is a unique approach to comprehensive, coordinated watershed restoration and can be used as a model throughout the state. The implementation of this project demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach, particularly in the early involvement of DFG and NMFS in the design process.
12. **Readiness:** Project designs are complete and permits are already secured. SCCRCD is ready to start construction this August. SCCRCD has demonstrated that it has the expertise, local public support, and administrative capability necessary to commence and complete the projects this year.
13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” above.
15. **Cooperation:** The fundamental principle behind IWRP is the cooperation of local, state, and federal partners. This project developed out of the cooperation of the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District, DFG, NMFS, NRCS, Conservancy, the Packard Foundation, American Rivers, and landowners, among many others.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

By modifying a significant anthropogenic barrier to fishery migration and restoring passage to over four miles of spawning and rearing habitat, the proposed project will help to satisfy several of the priorities listed in the County's 1994 certified General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP) including:

- Objective 5.2 Riparian Corridors and Wetlands: To preserve, protect and restore all riparian corridor and wetlands for the protection of wildlife and aquatic habitat, water quality, erosion control, open space, aesthetic and recreational values and the conveyance and storage of flood waters (p. 5-9).
- Program (h): Identify and restore aquatic and marine habitats which have been damaged due to human activities (p.5-13).

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/ STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:

The Tucker Ford Fish Passage Improvement Project is recommended as a high priority project in the following local watershed management plans:

- The Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan for Northern Santa Cruz County (2005)
- Soquel Creek Watershed Assessment and Enhancement Plan (2003)

Because the project will facilitate the restoration of fish and wildlife habitat in coastal watersheds and wetlands, including habitat for the state- and federally-listed anadromous Coho salmon and steelhead, the project is also consistent with the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region in

1994 and reviewed every three years) in that the project will further the following beneficial use objectives:

- Wildlife habitat
- Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species
- Migration of Aquatic Organisms
- Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (“SCCRCD”) proposes to replace the Tucker Road ford with a clear span bridge to allow migration of anadromous fish to over four miles of spawning and rearing habitat upstream of the project. An Initial Study was prepared for the project. As the lead agency for purposes of CEQA, Santa Cruz County, through its Planning Department, approved the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project, finding that as long as mitigation measures and conditions are complied with, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. The project and its environmental effects are described below.

This project is located where Tucker Road crosses the West Branch of Soquel Creek. The project consists of replacing a 31-foot long, 42-foot wide, and 4-foot deep concrete wet crossing ford with a 120-foot clear span bridge to improve fish passage on the West Branch of Soquel Creek in Santa Cruz County. In addition, the channel upstream of the ford will be reshaped to a 3% slope to restore the former channel morphology. Channel banks will be shaped to a minimum 2:1 slope, stabilized with temporary erosion control measures and revegetated with native plants. The presence of bedrock in the downstream reach should provide substantial grade control once the ford is removed. No heavy equipment will be operated within the live stream channel. The SCCRCD plans to construct this project between July 1, 2006 and October 15, 2006.

The County of Santa Cruz approved the Environmental Review Initial Study (“IS”) and Mitigated Negative Declaration on April 12, 2006, and a Notice of Determination (“NOD”) on May 31, 2006 (see Exhibits 4 and 5). The initial study identified potentially significant impacts that can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level in the areas of geology & soils and biological resources, as described below.

Geology & Soils: The initial study identified potential impacts with regards to soil erosion resulting from project construction activities. While the purpose of the project is to improve fish passage and remediate a chronic sedimentation source, any short-term potential impacts resulting from construction will be mitigated by implementing an extensive series of Best Management Practices (“BMPs”) which have been incorporated into the project. These BMPs include:

- 1) A stream bypass installed according to the direction of the Department of Fish and Game.
- 2) Revegetation of all bare soils.
- 3) Management of spoils to prevent them from entering the creek.
- 4) Specification of all seeds and plants to prevent introduction of non-native species as approved by a qualified biologist.
- 5) A construction schedule that includes completion of all earthwork prior to October 15.

Taken together the mitigation measures reduce the potential impacts to geology and soils to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources: The initial study identified potential impacts to sensitive or listed wildlife species resulting from project construction activities. These include the potential to have an adverse effect on special status species and sensitive biotic communities. While the purpose of the project is to improve the migration of special status salmonids and reduce non-native vegetation, any short-term potential impacts will be mitigated by implementing the following measures (specified in the Biotic Assessment, Exhibit 6, and the County NOD and IS):

- 1) Start date after August 1 to accommodate the migration period of trout, breeding time of sensitive bird species and the California Yellow-Legged Frog.
- 2) Training of staff and periodic professional inspection.
- 3) Pre-construction surveys for California Red-Legged Frog, California Yellow-Legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle.
- 4) Monitoring of the initial clearing, ford removal and channel grading by a qualified biologist, with provision for additional monitoring should Western Pond Turtle be found on site.
- 5) Flagging the site to minimize disturbance.
- 6) Pre-construction removal of fish, including dispatch of non-natives, and construction of an approved stream bypass. Water pumped from the upstream side of the diversion dam shall be pumped to a tank or an upland area, or filtered prior to return to the stream.
- 7) The project fish biologist shall visit the site twice weekly
- 8) In order to mitigate impacts to the riparian corridor, prior to issuance of the riparian exception or grading permit, the applicant shall submit a detailed restoration plan for replacement of riparian vegetation that is removed and for revegetation of disturbed areas, for review and approval by County staff. The plan shall include: plot plan showing where disturbance will occur and where replacement plants will be planted, species list, and maintenance and monitoring for five years or until success standards are reached. The maintenance plan shall include three years summer irrigation and follow up removal of non -native species for five years. Trees to remain within the disturbance area shall be flagged in advance of any disturbance
- 9) In order to avoid impacts to special status plants, prior to issuance of the riparian exception or grading permit the project biologist shall perform properly timed floristic surveys for species listed as potentially occurring in the project area in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). If the surveys are positive, the project plans shall be modified to avoid the special status plants.

Taken together the mitigation measures reduce the potential impacts on special status species and sensitive biotic communities to a less than significant level.

The County also identified less-than-significant impacts in the areas of geology & soils, cultural resources, transportation & traffic, noise, air quality, and public services & utilities. The County addressed or incorporated mitigation measures to lessen these impacts, including:

- 1) Geology & Soils: a geotechnical investigation prepared by Bauldry Engineering (January 24, 2006) concluded that significant seismic shaking will occur during the lifetime of the project and that there is the potential for liquefaction and scour. Adherence to the California Building Code and specific recommendations in the geotechnical report, which are incorporated into the plans, will reduce the impact to less than significant. In addition, the report concluded that the potential for localized landsliding to occur and directly impact the bridge is low. These reports have been reviewed and accepted by the County Geologist.
- 2) Cultural Resources: it is unlikely that any archaeological resources will be disturbed in the project area, but, pursuant to County Code Section 16.40.040, should any be discovered all work will cease and desist and comply with notification procedures given in County Code Section 16.40.040.
- 3) Transportation & Traffic: No additional permanent traffic will be generated by the project. There will be temporary traffic created by the workers and by trucks removing concrete rubble and sediment generated by the earthwork phase of the project. However, the project includes plans to park vehicles at pullouts on Highway 17 and Sugarloaf Road to minimize construction related trips. The concrete and excess sediment is proposed to be exported to two sites on the project parcels, away from the stream, which will also minimize truck trips on the small, rural road. Together with the fact that the extra trips will be temporary, the carpooling and the local fill sites cause any impact to be less than significant.
- 4) Noise: ambient noise levels will increase for adjoining areas during construction, but given the limited duration of this impact, it is considered less than significant.
- 5) Air Quality: standard dust control BMPs will be implemented during construction to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.
- 6) Public Services & Utilities: There will be a period of time during construction (approximately 4-6 weeks) when there will be no vehicle access. Though this time period occurs during the summer when there is usually access, it is not considered to be a significant impact. The benefit of reliable, all weather emergency vehicle access as a result of completing the project is far greater than the limited impact of six weeks of pedestrian-only access. Emergency service providers will be notified in advance of the construction period.

Staff has reviewed the County's Mitigated Negative Declaration, and the biotic reports and monitoring programs prepared for the County for the Tucker Ford Fish Passage Improvement Project and recommends that the Conservancy, as a responsible agency, find that the project, as mitigated, does not have the potential to have a significant effect on the environment. Staff will file a Notice of Determination upon approval of the project.